

THE WASHINGTON POST

DATE 7 MAR 73

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Viet Reports Falsified, CIA Analyst Says

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LOS ANGELES, March 6—An intelligence analyst for the Central Intelligence Agency testified in federal court here today that American military officials in Vietnam systematically falsified reports on the strength of the Communist forces there during the late 1960s.

Samuel A. Adams, subpoenaed as a defense witness in the Pentagon Papers trial, said that at one point when Communist forces were actually increasing in Vietnam, the official U.S. estimates of their numbers — sent to the White House and released to the press — were going down.

This happened, he explained, because the U.S. Military Assistance Command in Vietnam (MACV) deliberately "removed components" of the Communist forces from the "order of battle," which is the formal name of the intelligence estimate of opposing forces.

Adams said it was his impression, after attending meetings on the subject in Saigon, Honolulu and at CIA headquarters in Langley, Va., that this was done in 1968 as "a result of political pressures within the military to display the enemy as weaker than he actually was."

The CIA analyst suggested from the witness stand that Gen. Earle C. Wheeler, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Gen. William C. Westmoreland, then commander of MACV, had been involved in the falsification of the statistics.

As a result of the falsification, Adams testified, the dis-

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closure by Daniel Ellsberg and Anthony J. Russo Jr. of top-secret documents containing the "order of battle" would have been "virtually useless" to a foreign nation.

Ellsberg and Russo are on trial here on charges of conspiracy, espionage and theft of government property as a result of their photocopying of the Pentagon Papers and other classified material from the Rand Corporation in 1969.

One of the documents mentioned in the indictment against them is a 1968 assessment by Gen. Wheeler of the affects of the Vietnamese Communists' Tet offensive.

Lt. Gen. William G. DePuy, testifying for the prosecution earlier in the trial, said the "order of battle" was one of the most sensitive items in that document and that its disclosure would have endangered the U.S. "national defense."

One paragraph in the Wheeler report cited by DePuy, an assistant to the Army Chief of Staff, said:

"He (the Vietnamese Communists) committed over 67,000 combat maneuver forces plus perhaps 25 per cent or 17,000 more impressed men and boys, for a total of about 84,000. He lost 40,000 killed, at least 3,000 captured, and perhaps 5,000 disabled or died of wounds. He had peaked his force total to about 240,000 just before Tet, by hard recruiting, infiltration, civilian impressment, and drawdowns on service and guerrilla personnel."

Adams, shown that paragraph on a courtroom screen today, said that every statistic in it was unreliable.

He explained that the 240,000 figure included only the Communists' "regulars," "guerrillas," and "service troops"—and even those at lower than realistic levels.

Left out altogether, Adams added, were the "self-defense militia," "secret self-defense," "political cadres" and "assault youths," all of whom played a role in the Communists' war effort. Had they been included, the intelligence analyst said, as he stood at a easel in the middle of the courtroom tallying them up, the accurate "order of battle" would

Even if the "order of battle" had been an accurate des-

cription of the situation as it was in February, 1968—when the Wheeler report was written—by October, 1969, when Ellsberg and Russo copied the document, information would have been "dated," Adams said.

Adams' testimony was considered especially significant, because he is the only actual intelligence analyst to appear at the trial.

He was able to explain on the basis of personal knowledge and experience how intelligence gathering and analysis works, while previous witnesses for both sides have testified on this point primarily in hypothetical terms.

A direct descendant of John Adams, the second president of the United States, he provided a brief chronicle of his career at the CIA, where he first studied the Congo and then, until April of last year, the Vietcong. He said he is now assigned to study "another country."

When he first took the witness stand this morning, Adams turned to the jury and said, "Incidentally, I am a researcher, not a spy, which is why I can get up here and talk."

His testimony was full of colloquialisms. He defined "order of battle" this way, for example: "Our estimate of how many baddies there are out there fighting against us."

After U.S. District Court Judge W. Matt Byrne Jr. cut in to ask what "baddies" meant, Adams corrected himself to say "adversaries" or "foe" each time he referred to the subject.

His job at the CIA with regard to the Vietcong, Adams said, was "trying to dope out what made these guys tick." As he testified, he became increasingly animated, and moved around so much on the witness stand that his shirttail was hanging out in back by the time each recess came around.

Byrne would not permit defense attorney Charles Nessen to question Adams about his unsuccessful attempts to get the Justice Department to use the "order of battle" information in this case. The defense, charging that the prosecutor was trying to "silence" Adams subpoenaed him after learning about those efforts.

Nissen began his cross-examination of Adams late today

inquiring about the intelligence analyst's contacts with Ellsberg's and Russo's attorneys and consultants.

Adams acknowledged that Morton H. Halperin, a former Pentagon official who is now a consultant to Ellsberg, had "referred to you (Nissen) as an untrustworthy character" during a conversation in Washington several weeks ago.

The intelligence analyst's testimony today included rare and frank public appraisals of the comparative quality of American and Vietnamese Communist intelligence operations.

He said that the Communists' intelligence was "excellent" and that at one point they "got copies of early drafts" of a joint American-South Vietnamese military operation "before our own commanders did."

By contrast, Adams testified, U.S. intelligence in Vietnam was "bad."